

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

November, 2017

Featured Artist

Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier

"Plantlife Perspectives"





Wading

Artist Interview

Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier

Karen, you are a prolific image-maker. How did you come to pick this particular group of works as your Dek Unu portfolio?

I had a terrifically large bleeding heart plant which had so many blossoms, I started shooting some macro images of the flowers. I decided that dissecting the single flower, breaking it apart to change its shape, made for a more interesting image. Little did I know it would eventually provide me with the image of a face, like one sees in "Portrait In My Locket". It simply snowballed from there! I was then on the hunt for more, trying to find something unusual within the plants in order to portray an obscure and alternate reality. I like to think it became a happy accident that the images in this series were born.

You have said that you make your images "intuitively." Are you self-taught?

My work happens intuitively for sure and I'm definitely an autodidact! Although I do have the traditional photography + journalism degree, I didn't start this kind of visual art until around 2013.

Your work is a sort of dance among layers of imagery. You draw from such an assortment of visual sources! How do you know when an image is "done?"

Experimenting with layers, colours and textures is a self-inflicted challenge. I've become a bit of a souvenir hunter of textures. I think digital images don't easily reveal textures the way in which I like. That translates into knowing an image is done if adding one more layer obscures the original image too much for comfort.

Can you give an example of how that works?

I always need to recognize the image's starting point. Still, it has to be altered enough that some guess work is required of the viewer. "Wild Child" for example, is actually a poppy pod before blooming. It is overlapping a separate image of a boy. The soft spiny poppy hairs compliment the boy's wild hair, not to mention the position of his neck in relation to the pod's stem. Layering the hairs of each separate image suddenly gave the original poppy pod a completely different vibe and personality. It transformed into a sharp and unexpected character who might pierce or take a bite out of the viewer. Hence, the boy's vibrant grin had to stay!

Talk about your "work day." Are there tools, techniques, or tricks that help you get it done?

I have more cameras than I need. A high tech or simple camera doesn't make much difference to me. I use them all. I just try to find the light. I don't use a studio as I prefer the natural light. It always provides me with a surprise. Software is important, but I don't use presets. I use seven different programs in no particular

order of preference, uploading an image and manipulating it back and forth between programs. What software I use depends on the original image and what may best suit my desired result. I enjoy shooting in macro, tilt-shift, black and white or ultraviolet and altered luminescence, but I frequently find that simple is best.

Your work is all about "surprises."

Yes. I was sitting having a morning coffee; head down in thought and I was suddenly startled by a loud 'thunk' on the big kitchen window to my left. A bird had hit it while in full flight. It wasn't until that evening's sunset, now firing light through the window, that I saw illuminated this echoed image of a bird, showing its open wingspan of spread feathers before it was stunned to a halt. It must have been a large raven. The bird's image was invisible all day, until the sun blazed though it. For me the pane of glass became this beautiful surprise of texture and light. I rushed for my camera and began shooting. You can actually see a version of it in *Entropy Magazine* (<https://www.entropymag.org/the-birds-flesh-and-feathers>).

Where can we see more of your work?

My work finds homes in many literary journals and anthologies on line and in print. I love places like *Dek Unu Magazine* because these types of venues keep me thinking, changing my course and moving me forward with fresh ideas and prompts. My work can be found on my website at <https://www.kcbgphoto.com/>. Literacy is also important to me, so I use some of my visual art to design apparel for Shop VIDA in support of their 'Literacy for Life' program. I believe everyone should have the ability to read, write and learn basic math skills. I hope many will support this important cause!

<https://shopvida.com/collections/karen-c-boissonneault-gauthier>

What's on your calendar for the upcoming months?

Soon to launch is a book entitled *A Caged Mind*, in which I participated. Its focus is to create awareness about concussions and brain injuries. Fun fact ~ I spent many years as a competitive skater. Now with my kids playing hockey, I have always helped out as one of their team's bench staff. I am again the team trainer for my son's Midget hockey team. Hockey and concussions go hand-in-hand, so when I heard about this book project, whose models were body painted with their own personal concussion symptoms, I offered to photograph models. Take a sneak peak of my portraits for *A Caged Mind* at: <https://www.kcbgphoto.com/project-5>. Most important to me is to create art that makes a difference. If I can't help someone with my work, I'm not helping myself!



Seeing Red



Watering the Flowers



The Window To My Heart



Portrait in My Locket



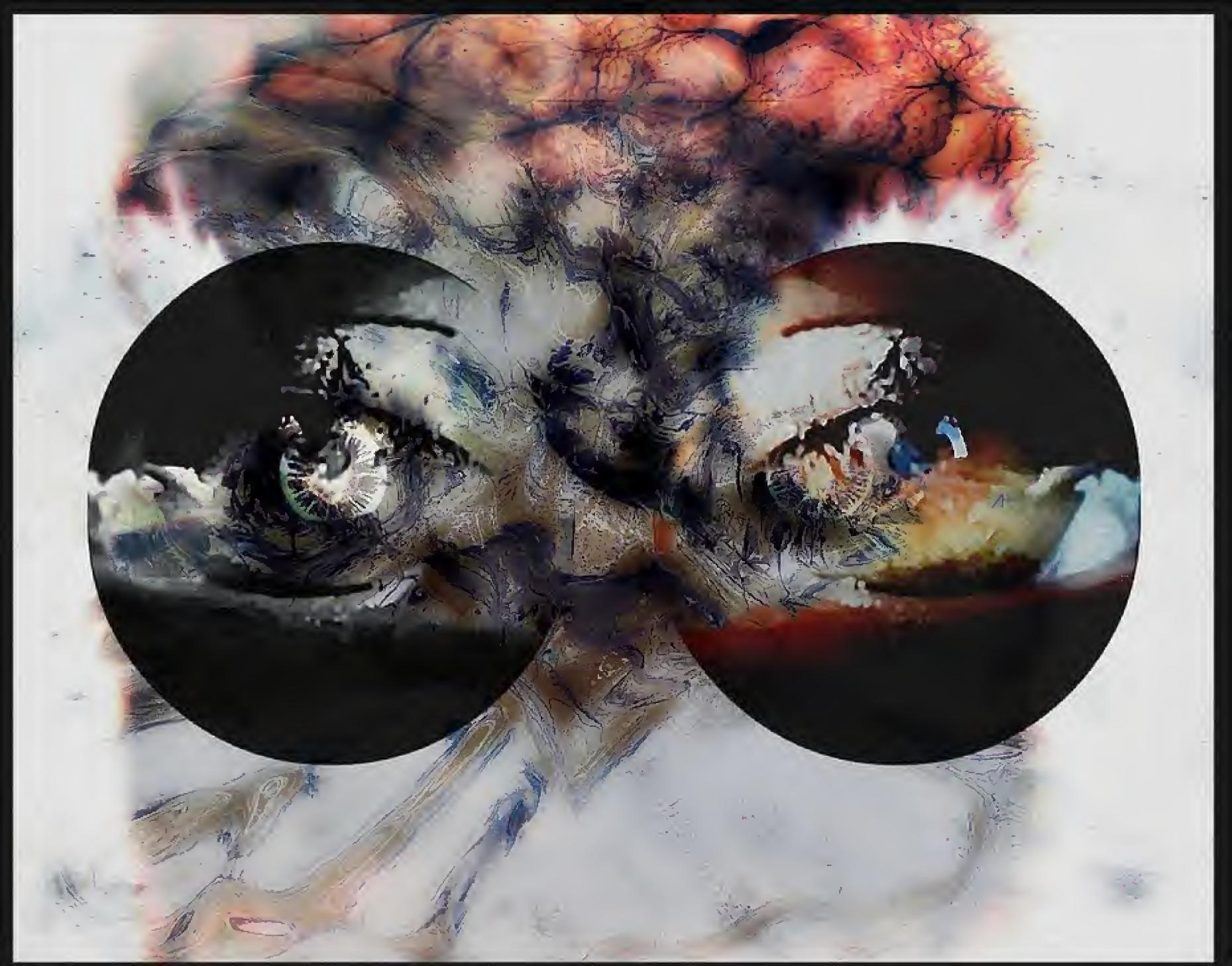
Wild Child



Parrot Tulip Nesting



Seeds of My Life



Owl Vision



Succulent View



Goat Poison